

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2006 3:00-5:10pm

Officers Present: President Lynn Shepherd, President-Elect Chuck Craig

Faculty Senators Present: Brian Blitz, Jennifer Brown, Eve Dillingham, Virgil Fredenberg, Lisa Hoferkamp, Yuliya Ivanova, Jane Terzis, Dave Noon (for Robin Walz)

Ex-officio: Provost Robbie Stell

1. Approval of minutes for December 2, 2005 meeting: Moved, seconded, and approved with one revision: Eve Dillingham asked for the words, "...**beginning to resolve...**" be added before the final bolded item under **Curriculum quality assurance: Outcomes Control**.

2. Approval of agenda.

4. Old business

A. Online course evaluations

Discussion:

Lynn: St. Georges' has two separate questionnaires. After students finish the first one, there is a prompt linking them to the next. One is for instructor, other is for course content, but this could also be used for IT, Library Services and Competency questions. He left a book for us outlining online evaluations.

Lisa: Regarding course effectiveness vs. instructor effectiveness, how can students differentiate course material from how they feel about the instructor's work in the course? Maybe they just don't like the instructor.

Yuliya: At UAS, faculty tend to design their own courses, so that might take care of that problem.

Lynn: we've already gone through a good part of St George's process. What concerns and priorities have Senators brought back from their departments?

Responses:

Dave: Social Science faculty do mid-semester evaluations (informal, formative) on our own, in addition to end-of- semester evaluations (formative and summative, formal). Our priority: improve instruction. Weakness: What one group picks up on might or might not carry over to the next semester, or year.

Jane: Humanities concerns/requests:

- **CONCERN:** Default completion window for students is three days – this is not enough time and faculty were not reminded to expand these dates.
- **REQUEST:** Make the longest period possible the default period and remind faculty to narrow this window if they choose to.
- **CONCERN:** Many of the currently used questions are irrelevant to Humanities courses. Students sometimes assign low ranks to questions that they feel are inappropriate, rather than using the N/A option.
- **REQUEST:** Allow faculty to eliminate questions, or allow each *department* to customize *their own* questionnaire to reflect a more relevant and comprehensive (more useful) range of questions.
- **CONCERN:** Email reminders are sent to students' UAS-assigned email address. Many students do not use this address and do not receive the reminder.

- REQUEST: Make more of an attempt to solicit working email addresses from students.
- CONCERN: The current instrument is used to accomplish an excessive number of tasks, inhibiting useful information reflecting *faculty* effectiveness (I.T. Services, Library Services...).
- REQUEST: Re-evaluate which tasks are appropriate to this instrument and streamline.

Lisa: Our goal is to improve teaching (summative; should be used for teaching only). Not much support for using evaluations for IT or LIB services or Competencies. This should be evaluated using a different tool.

Jennifer: This instrument should be used mainly for teaching, but we value the IT and Library questions – this helps faculty in their teaching effectiveness.

Yuliya: Business is not dissatisfied and has no big complaints. Priority should be for evaluating teaching performance. IT & LIB & Competencies should be a 2nd priority. This instrument is less important to business courses. Please keep number of questions down to as few as possible.

Chuck: Course effectiveness and quality of instruction are priorities. Other concerns are secondary.

Virgil: Priorities are course effectiveness and quality of instruction. Keep it simple, as few questions as possible. Have two forms and prompt students with a link to follow on to IT, LIB, and Competencies. Instructor and course effectiveness questions need to move to the top of the form, including questions that are added by individual instructors or departments.

Eve: Some departments might want to include IT, LIB, Competencies questions and we should allow them to do that.

Robbie: In the comment section, students tend to contribute formative comments, rather than expounding on technical issues. Our office needs responses to all of these questions for accreditation purposes. Perhaps there is a better way to explain this to students, and the form can be re-sorted to make it more relevant to course and instructor evaluation. The IT, LIB and Competences could be separated out afterward and not go into an instructor's file.

Dave: IT Services needs to find their own way to document this information.

Lynn: Instructor performance and course effectiveness seem to be the priority. The instrument needs to be useful to adjuncts also. We have examples that Jeff gave us (St. George's) and an expanded list of questions that the Senate's working group recommended earlier this year in response to a Senate request. Let's establish a working group of Senators to look at all the materials and come back in February with a consensus and rationale.

Working group volunteers: Yuliya, Lisa, and Robin (contact to see if he can attend) will meet before the next Senate mtg. They will deal with Instructor performance (what would go into a tenure & promotion review file) and ancillary information on what data would be useful that does not include instructor performance. This group would confirm or change the four global questions at the top of the questionnaire. The detailed questions that make up the rest of the form have a different relevance to different departments. We may need other working groups for IT, Library, Competency questions.

B. Curriculum Quality Assurance

Lynn: Do we review courses often enough to know how they are doing? Are distance courses equivalent across MAU's ?

Yuliya: This is carefully discussed in her department, Business, & Public Admin, and dealt with there; there no issues to discuss at the Senate level.

Eve: Ditto for her dept.

Robbie: It is very difficult to legislate quality. We say that we will honor credits from other institutions, if they are comparable. This is determined by the Registrar's office, which looks at GER's, electives, etc. If a student applies for a certificate or a degree program, the Registrar goes as far as she can to determine comparability. If there is a question, the file goes to the appropriate department to see if they will accept a course as a program credit. If they say no, then the transfer is listed as an elective credit.

Lynn: Oversight is already in place at the departmental level. Let's drop it as an issue.

Lynn: Do we need to develop a process for getting new Occupational Endorsement programs, some of which include GER's, sent to the Senate before they go to the Curriculum Committee?

Discussion: Does the Senate want to take on approval of Occupational Endorsements for existing and/or new programs? Previously, these have been called 'departmental certificates' and have gone straight to the Curriculum Committee without Senate approval first. Pro: such programs impinge on other departments and the availability of resources. Con: these programs need quick turnaround times for approval in order to remain responsive to workforce needs.

Consensus: Status quo.

C. State Distance Ed Report ([attachment 4C](#))

Move to next Senate meeting.

5. New Business

A. SW discussion of GERs (attachment / handout 5A)

Lynn: There may be a need for faculty members across disciplines to discuss GERs, especially their transferability among UA institutions. Should the Faculty Alliance propose to the VP for Research & Academic Affairs that he sponsor a meeting of faculty from the three MAU's to discuss GER/core curriculum philosophy and the transferability of credits to other institutions? Would our faculty be interested in participating in such a meeting? Do we think the time is right for this? If there's Senate approval for such a proposal, UAS would recruit 4-5 representatives to attend such a meeting.

Robbie: For those interested, there's a national conference about liberal arts/core curricula in Seattle in April, and she's willing to sponsor 4-5 UAS faculty to attend. An examination of our core is probably long overdue; at the moment, it's a menu of choices that evolved over time, and it may not have the coherence we desire. UAF faculty have proposed changes regarding the transferability of GERs from UAA and UAS in meeting their core requirements. However, acceptance of the UAF proposal would involve changing Board of Regents policy, and that's a long-term process.

B. Performance-based Budgeting Measures Outreach Activities (attachments [5B.1](#), [5B.2](#), [5B.3](#))

We have 7 measures in place. A statewide committee was working last year on an 8th measure for 'outreach activities' (see attachment / handout) but stopped meeting when the chair went on maternity leave. Should faculty governance bodies (i.e. Senates, Faculty Alliance) take the lead in developing this measure? Would a couple of faculty members be willing to serve on a SW committee to continue development of a proposal for this PBB? SW has issued an RFP for development of an electronic Faculty Workload System, and service activities will be included in

it. There's a lot of overlap between the service activities we already do, and 'outreach activities', so we could decide how they are defined.

Robbie: The line between Public Service and Outreach often blurs. Can we describe Public Service better as Outreach? Is it perhaps a broader category? Right now, these efforts are not quantified effectively.

Consensus: Get feedback from our departments and come back to this in February.

C. SW Funds

- i) \$4m in Gov's budget for competitive research (some for matching funds)
- ii) BP/Conoco-Philips (Pres. Profs., AK public policy research, Research & Instructional Initiatives, K-12/University partnerships, DE, Sharing Scholarship, Econ Development/Business partnerships)

Lynn: Governor's budget proposal includes funding for 'competitive research'. If the Legislature passes the budget proposal, some of the money is earmarked, but the remainder could be available on a competitive basis. Do we have recommendations on how that competitive process should work? There is also BP/Conoco Philips money available each year. Among the categories listed above, what are our priorities for how this money should be disbursed?

Robbie: There are funds available, and SAC welcomes more ideas for how to use this money.

Reports

1) Faculty Alliance:

- i) Electronic faculty workload system
- ii) BOR Policy – defining Academic Units; creation/elimination
- iii) Instructional Designer Job Family

2) Bookstore: (attachments [6C.1](#), [6C.2](#), [6C.3](#), [6C.4](#))

Refer to documents 6C 1, 2, 3 from Sara Hagen with information about bookstore issues, and some ways in which faculty can help make textbooks more affordable for students. The bookstore operates on a cost-recovery basis but could make textbooks more affordable by increasing the number of textbooks it buys back and sells as Used. However, it can't be stuck with unusable inventory. The Ad Hoc Textbook Committee recommends: Identify GER courses that have consistently used the same texts, so the bookstore can buy those texts back and re-sell them, while still maintaining enough of a margin to cover the costs of doing so.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.

Minutes prepared by Jane Terzis and Lynn Shepherd, January 14, 2006